Water Quality Standards Amendment Number 5

Advisory group

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1. Extend Indicator Bacteria WQS seaward beyond 300m to 500m

After consulting with the Hawaii Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, it was recommended that the recreational waters boundary be extended from 300 m to 500 m from the shore. By doing this, almost all surf sites in Hawaii would be located within the recreational waters boundary. With surfing located in this extended boundary, this boundary will represent almost all recreational water activities occurring near the shoreline. Within this boundary you will find the following activities; shore fishing, skin diving, swimming, surfing, hang gliding, jet skiing, kayaking, small vessel boating, outrigger canoeing, and reef related activities(reef walks, limu gathering, night torching, etc.). Beyond 500 m from the shore, activities are more related to transient recreation like deep sea fishing (trolling) and sailing.

2. Off shore single sample maximum (beyond 500m).

Since most recreational activities are located within the shore to 500 m seaward boundary, the amount of use beyond 500 m can be classed as light to infrequent use. Most coastal shore areas of Hawaii are undeveloped. Offshore recreational activities focus around areas of access such as, small boat harbors, boat ramps, and parks with sufficient parking. Other than these offshore areas near access points, recreational use is infrequent. In keeping with the Final Rule for Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Bacteria for infrequent use coastal recreation waters, the associated Single Sample Maximum of 501 per 100ml of Enterococci is established.

3. Raise Enterococci to Federal Standard.

The heavy rains in 2004 have shown that storm water discharges into the coastal waters can have indicator bacteria counts as high or even higher than a sewage spill into the coastal waters. Our beach monitoring has shown repeatedly that after a storm event, indicator counts of bacteria are elevated and has required the Clean Water Branch to initiate a running geometric mean on certain beaches exposed to storm water runoff. The cause of these high non-sewage related counts is the natural high counts found in streams discharging into coastal area. In light of these events, the advisory group recommends that we follow the EPA Water Quality Standards for Coastal and Great Lakes Recreation Waters; Final Rule and establish a geometric mean of 35 per 100ml of Enterococci for our marine coastal waters. This will give a more realistic standard for our coastal waters impacted by streams high in non-sewage indicator bacteria. Raising the standard to 35 per 100ml will also allow our micro lab to use faster analysis methods that were not suitable for our current standard of 7 per 100ml. Most if not all coastal states use 35 per 100 ml as their marine standard. Thus, the focus of new analysis methods are directed at levels of 35 per 100 ml. To continue with 7 per 100 ml as the marine standard would not be in the best interest of Hawaii as no new analysis methods are being looked into for levels of 7 per 100 ml. Our increased BEACH monitoring program requires a faster turn around time and increasing the standard to 35 per 100 ml will allow the use of faster EPA approved analysis methods upon their development.

In Summary

Advisory group recommends that the recreational waters be extended to 500 m offshore, waters beyond 500 m be classed as light use coastal recreation waters with a single sample maximum of 501 per 100ml of Enterococci, and raise the geometric mean for Enterococci to the federal standard of 35 per 100 ml consistent with the EPA Water Quality Standards for Coastal and Great Lakes Recreation Waters; Final Rule.